



NAVAL AIR WARFARE CENTER WARMINSTER COMMUNITY FACT SHEET EPA TO TEST PRIVATE DRINKING WATER WELLS

Warminster, PA

<http://www.epa.gov/reg3hscd/npl/PA6170024545.htm>

August 2014

PRIVATE DRINKING WATER WELLS TO BE TESTED FOR PERFLUOROOCTANOIC ACID (PFOA) AND PERFLUOROOCTANE SULFONATE (PFOS)

At the request of the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is providing technical expertise to determine if private drinking water wells in the area of the former Naval Air Warfare Center (NAWC), Warminster, PA, have been impacted by PFOA and PFOS. EPA is coordinating closely with the U.S. Navy, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and the Warminster Township Municipal Authority (WTMA) to ensure that public health is protected.

Samples taken recently by the WTMA in public wells show levels of PFOS above EPA's provisional health advisory level (HAL). In response, two public drinking water production wells have been taken off-line and EPA is requesting access to sample private residential wells. Results will determine if additional actions are needed to protect human health and the environment.

EPA SEEKS PERMISSION TO SAMPLE PRIVATE DRINKING WATER WELLS

Representatives from the EPA have begun contacting users of private drinking water wells to obtain permission to take samples from those wells.

The purpose of the sampling is to determine if levels of PFOS and PFOA are present in drinking water above the provisional HALs and if actions are necessary to ensure that people have access to an alternate water supply.

The sampling is being done at no cost to private well users and the results are expected to be available within two to three weeks. To have your well tested, please contact:

Ruth Scharr, EPA On-Scene Coordinator
Scharr.ruth@epa.gov
215 756-7897

Larry Brown, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
Brown.larry@epa.gov
215-814-5527

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

We understand that the community may have additional questions and concerns about potential exposure to PFOA and PFOS. We will continue to consult with our health agency partners to provide additional information as it becomes available.

Q: Can I continue to drink the public water?

A: Yes. The WTMA well that had PFOS at a level exceeding the provisional HAL has been taken off-line until a treatment system can be installed.

Q: What if I use a private drinking water well?

A: At this time, we do not have data about private drinking water wells in the area, which is why the Navy has requested EPA's expertise to conduct sampling activities.

If samples show PFOS or PFOA levels above the provisional HALs, EPA will work with the U.S. Navy and our local and state partners to ensure private well users have access to an alternate water supply.

Q: What Happened?

A: One of the Warminster supply wells was recently sampled for PFOS and found to have PFOS levels above EPA's provisional HAL. PFOS was also detected in other supply wells but not above the provisional HAL. WTMA has notified its customers about this water quality information.

In the past, other contaminants have been identified in the vicinity of the former NAWC base, a condition the U.S. Navy has and continues to investigate and cleanup.

Q: What are Provisional Health Advisory Levels (HALs)?

A: In 2009, EPA issued provisional HALs for PFOS and PFOA for which there are no drinking water standards.

While EPA continues its research into the impacts of these chemicals on human health and the environment, provisional HALs serve as informal technical guidance designed to assist federal, state and local officials in evaluating threats to local water supplies. Provisional HALs are not federally enforceable standards and are subject to change as new information becomes available.

In 2013, the EPA required many public water systems, including the WTMA, to sample for a group of 28 unregulated contaminants, including PFOS and PFOA.

Q: What adverse health effects may be associated with exposure to PFOS and PFOA?

A: Studies indicate that PFOA and PFOS can cause developmental, reproductive, and other adverse effects in laboratory animals. The most consistent findings from epidemiology studies are elevated serum total cholesterol levels among exposed populations with more limited findings related to low infant birth weights.

Q: What is being done?

A: The WTMA has taken Supply Well No. 26 off-line, along with Supply Well No. 13 which is in close proximity to the NAWC.

EPA, the U.S. Navy, PADEP and the WTMA are currently evaluating possible response actions, including treatment options for those wells.

The WTMA took additional samples from the affected public wells in early June 2014 and expects the results by late June 2014.

In addition, the U.S. Navy has requested EPA expertise to sample private drinking water wells to determine if PFOS is present at levels above the provisional HAL.

Q: What are PFOA and PFOS?

A: PFOA and PFOS are organic chemicals used in repellants for stains, water, oil, and grease. Commercial and consumer products containing or degrading to these compounds were first introduced in the 1950s. They have been used in a variety of products such as the fabric of upholstered furniture, carpets, nonstick cookware, floor wax, and the lining of microwave popcorn bags. Firefighting foams also contain these chemicals. Over time, both chemicals became widely distributed in the environment and have been detected in the blood of humans, wildlife, and fish.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

EPA information on PFOA and PFOS

<http://www.epa.gov/oppt/pfoa/pubs/pfoainfo.html>

EPA drinking water health advisories

<http://water.epa.gov/drink/standards/hascience.cfm>

EPA's 2014 draft health effects for PFOA and PFOS

<http://peerreview.versar.com/epa/pfoa/>

Ongoing cleanup at the former NAWC

<http://www.epa.gov/reg3hscd/npl/PA6170024545.htm>

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